

# ITEM 8-A

## CITY OF ALAMEDA

### Memorandum

To: Honorable President and  
Members of the Planning Board

From: Andrew Thomas,  
Planning Services Manager

Date: September 26, 2011

Re: **Use Permit PLN11-0220** – Alex Kang, San Francisco Region Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) and Alameda Reuse and Redevelopment Authority  
1951 Monarch Street (Alameda Point)

### BACKGROUND:

In 2002, the Planning Board approved an Interim Use Permit UP02-0027 for the Porsche Club to hold up to six autocross events per year. Pursuant to the Porsche Club Use Permit, the date, times and specifics of each scheduled event must be reviewed and approved through a license from the Alameda Reuse and Redevelopment Authority (ARRA) and approval of a Special Event Permit from the City of Alameda. The license serves as the approval to use the runways for a specific date and time. The license process allows the ARRA to ensure that the events do not conflict with other major events at Alameda Point, and are consistent with security provisions, endangered species protections, environmental remediation activities and other Alameda Point specific leasing issues. A Special Event Permit must be signed off by all the major City departments including the Community Development Department, Public Works Department, City Attorney's Office, and Police Department. This permit enables the City to ensure that each event is conducted in a way that is consistent with the Use Permit as well as all other City regulations, standards, and requirements. The Porsche Club has been successfully holding their events for the last nine years without incident.

In 2011, the San Francisco Region Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) approached the ARRA and the City to request a use permit similar to the Porsche Club permit for their club. The SCCA is requesting that their club also be allowed to hold up to six events at Alameda Point under the same conditions and limitations that are imposed upon the Porsche Club.

The SCCA currently holds its events at a variety of locations currently, including the Oakland Coliseum, the Great America Amusement Park, Candlestick Park and the Marina Municipal Airport. SCCA would like to add events at the Northwest Territories at Alameda Point.

## ANALYSIS:

The SCCA is requesting an Interim Use Permit to allow autocross events for a period of five years, exclusively on weekends. The autocross events involve drivers navigating automobiles through a slalom course constructed of traffic cones. The events would attract approximately 100 to 200 people and vehicles per event with associated food, product sales, and office booths. The events would begin at 7:00 a.m., close at 6:00 p.m. and occur on a 55-acre section of Runway 725 within the Northwest Territory.

These events would be held in the same area that is currently used by Alameda Point Antiques Fair (was: Antiques By the Bay), which operates the first Sunday of each month. Alameda Point Antiques Fair would take precedence over the autocross events, which typically occur on Saturdays and on those Sundays when Alameda Point Antiques Fair is not using the site. The Northwest Territories are isolated from the residential buildings at Alameda Point; the closest occupied former Navy residences are more than 500 feet away from the site. The Oakland/Alameda Estuary to the north is a ship channel; City View Skate Park is located to the east; the former bachelor military quarters to the south are currently vacant. Airplane hangars to the south have been leased for industrial uses; and the airplane runways to the south and west are no longer in use.

The Northwest Territories at Alameda Point is a large 215 acre area of land that is largely covered by the former runways and access roads constructed by the United States Navy. The area provides opportunities for the ARRA to lease large open, paved areas for large special events and unique or unusual activities that need wide, open spaces. Once a month, the Alameda Point Antiques Fair event attracts thousands of visitors from the entire Bay Area to the Northwest Territories at Alameda Point. Additionally, in the 1990's, some of the chase scenes from the movie "The Matrix" were filmed on the Northwest Territories. Currently, the TV show Myth Busters leases the Northwest Territories for a variety of odd and unusual stunts that require lots of. In the past, the Northwest Territories have been the site of large trade shows with large tents, lights, speakers, and exhibits for large numbers of attendees. The Police Department and Fire Department have also used the Northwest Territories for training exercises and driving skills training.

The Porsche Club and SCCA "autocross" events are designed to be a test of driver's skill. The courses are set up to include very tight turns that test a driver's skill, as opposed to the speed of the car. Drivers enter the course one at a time. Speeds average about 40 miles an hour, but vary between 25 and 55 miles per hour depending on the location of the driver on the course and the design of the course.

Given the experience that the City and the ARRA have had with the Porsche Club, staff is recommending approval of the SCCA use permit with the same conditions that are imposed on the Porsche Club Use Permit. Each of those conditions are described below:

1. Time Limit: This Use Permit is valid for five years after the date of approval.

*Limiting the use permit to five years allows the ARRA and the City to reevaluate the use in*

*5 years, and reinforces the concept that these uses are interim uses until such time that Alameda Point is redeveloped.*

2. Six Weekend Events: All events associated with this Use Permit shall occur exclusively on the weekends and shall be limited to six events annually.

*City plans and policies support a mix of uses and a variety of events, activities, and uses at Alameda Point. Auto-oriented uses and events can be part of the mix of activities, but they should not be the dominate use at Alameda Point. Between the Porsche Club and the SCCA Club, "autocross" events would not occur more than 12 weekends a year.*

3. Special Event Permit: The applicant shall apply for a Special Events Permit from the Community Development Department at least 30 days prior to each event associated with this Use Permit.

*As described above, the Special Event Permit provides an important mechanism to ensure that each event is in conformance with all requirements and reviewed by all of the major City departments.*

4. ARRA License: All events associated with this Use Permit shall receive prior approval from the ARRA staff to ensure that the events do not conflict with other events (i.e. Alameda Point Antiques Fair), existing uses, and development plans for the base.

*As described above, the ARRA licensing requirement for each event is an important tool to ensure that events do not conflict with other events or activities.*

5. Northwest Territories: The event would be operated within the approved confines and parameters of the Alameda Point Antiques Fair events on the Northwest Territories.

*For the purpose of the future Special Event Permit review this condition specifies the allowable location for the events.*

6. Hours of Operation: The events shall begin no earlier than 7:00 a.m. and shall end no later than 6:00 p.m.

*Restricting the events to daytime hours minimizes potential health, safety or security issues and eliminates the needs for lighting which can, if not properly done, conflict with endangered species in the vicinity.*

7. Event Size: A maximum of 150 cars and 180 people shall attend any event associated with this Use Permit.

The 150-car limit reflects the conditions under which the Porsche Club has operated. Limiting the size of the events, minimizes the potential for safety, security, or traffic issues.

8. Maximum Speeds: The maximum speed of any vehicle that is part of any autocross event associated with this Use Permit is limited to 55 miles per hour.

This condition serves as a limitation on car speed. It is important to acknowledge and reinforce that the Northwest Territories is a site that is appropriate for automobile events, driver training, and driver skill events, but it is not a race track. Violations of this, or any other condition, is grounds for revocation of this use permit.

9. Buffers: A 100-foot separation between the car course shall be maintained from the water, all existing buildings and the City View Skate Park, and from all other events or activities associated with this Use Permit.

Buffers between uses are essential to minimize potential security or safety issues.

10. Noise. The event sponsor shall self-monitor the decibels generated by any event associated with this Use Permit in order to ensure that the events conform to the restrictions of the City noise ordinance of the Alameda Municipal Code. In addition, ambient sound at the periphery of the lease area shall not exceed 65 decibels. No amplified public address systems or music shall be permitted as part of any event associated with this Use Permit.

*Establishing a measurable noise standard for the events is important to ensure that off-site noise impacts do not occur or disrupt other nearby activities. Over the last 9 years, noise has not been a problem for nearby users with the Porsche Club events.*

11. Parking and Traffic Control. Pursuant to the lease agreement, the applicant shall be responsible for traffic control (within the confines of the event) and shall designate parking spaces for all cars associated with the events.
12. Site Cleanup. Pursuant to the lease agreement, the applicant shall be responsible for the provision of portable toilets and waste receptacles. The project sponsor shall be responsible for the removal of all trash and vehicular fluids deposited on the site, as a result of any events associated with this Use Permit.
13. Other Permits. The applicant shall obtain and comply with the conditions of permits required by other agencies in connection with the site, including but not limited to use and custody of chemicals. Where the requirements of other agency permits are more restrictive than this approval, the other agencies' permits requirements shall apply.
14. Unenclosed Storage. There shall be no outdoor storage unless approved by the Planning and Building Director, and any outdoor storage permitted shall be temporary for in-transit materials.
15. Least Tern. Employees, vendors and customers of the applicant shall be prohibited from entering wetlands areas or areas of endangered species habitat, particularly the California Least Tern habitat southwest of Buildings 24 and 25. The applicant shall post information, to be provided by ARRA, regarding the value of the habitat areas on the base and the reasons for restrictions on human activity, and shall cooperate in

educational programs on these subjects. No animals except certified disability assistance dogs shall be permitted.

16. Stormwater/Wastewater. City of Alameda Municipal Code Sections 18-21 to 18-25 regarding storm water management and discharge control prohibit non-storm water discharges into the storm sewer system. The applicant shall comply with the requirements of the City of Alameda Public Works Department, Urban Runoff Manager, including but not limited to:
  - a. Best Management Practices (BMP's) as described in brochures available from the City of Alameda Public Works Department, to maintain waste management (trash) areas, loading areas and parking areas to insure that no debris or waste shall discharge to storm drain or contaminated rain water.
  - b. No washing of vehicles or equipment or maintenance or repair work shall be permitted except in designated, covered areas.
  - c. The site shall be kept clean of debris, which may contaminate storm drains. Only dry clean-up methods shall be used to maintain the site.
  - d. Prior to the event, the applicant shall make provisions for the Urban Runoff Program Manager and/or engineering staff to inspect adherence to Clean Water Program BMP's.
17. Revocation: This Use Permit may be modified or revoked by the Planning Board, pursuant to Alameda Municipal Code Section 30-21.3d should the Planning Board determine that: 1) the use or conditions under which it is being operated or maintained is detrimental to the public health, welfare or materially injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity; 2) the property is operated or maintained so as to constitute a public nuisance; or 3) the use is operated in violation of the conditions of the Use Permit.

#### USE PERMIT FINDINGS:

Based upon the analysis above and the recommended conditions of approval, staff can make the necessary findings for project approval:

1. The location of the proposed use is compatible with other land uses in the general neighborhood area.

The autocross events would occur on a 55-acre section of Runway 725 within the Northwest Territories, north of the proposed Alameda Point Wildlife Refuge at Alameda Point. This section of Alameda Point is isolated from the residential buildings at Alameda Point; the closest occupied former Navy residences are more than 500 feet away from the site. The Oakland/Alameda Estuary to the north is a ship channel; City View Skate Park is located to the east; the former bachelor military quarters to the south are currently vacant and have not been leased pending a Master Plan for Alameda

Point; airplane hangers to the south have been leased for industrial uses; and the airplane runways to the south and west are no longer in use.

These events would be held in the same area that is currently used by Alameda Point Antiques Fair (formerly Antiques By the Bay), which operates the first Sunday of each month. Alameda Point Antiques Fair would take precedence over the autocross events, which would occur on Saturdays and on those Sundays when Alameda Point Antiques Fair is not using the site. As conditioned below, a conspicuous and brightly colored temporary barrier shall be erected in front of the west side of the City View Skate Park on autocross event days to ensure that cars do not maneuver close to the skate park.

2. The proposed use will be served by adequate transportation and service facilities.  
Main Street provides access to the site and the area has adequate parking. Participants and visitors to the autocross events would utilize existing traffic routes and parking facilities that are already utilized by Alameda Point Antiques Fair visitors. Because the autocross events would occur during off-peak hours (on the weekends) and are expected to attract an average of 130 people, the events would have no significant impact on the Level of Service for traffic in the Webster and Posey Tubes.
3. The proposed use, if it complies with all conditions upon which approval is made contingent, will not adversely affect other property in the vicinity.  
The closest occupied former Navy residences are located more than 500 feet away from the site and the former Navy buildings nearby that are used for industrial and commercial would not be within noise or other impact zones of the use. The conditions of this approval would require the applicant to be responsible for the removal of all trash and litter generated on the site. The site is not within the proposed U.S. Fish and Wildlife refuge area, and is more than 2,000 feet from the Least Tern nest area.
4. The proposed use relates favorably to the General Plan.  
The site is located within an area designated as Parks and Open Space and the proposed Interim Use is compatible with this category. Allowing the proposed interim reuse will help Alameda Point to transition from past military use and contribute to visitor-serving facilities at Alameda Point.

#### INTERIM LEASE PROGRAM FINDINGS:

Use Permits issued under the Alameda Point Interim Leasing Program are subject to the following findings:

1. The interim use is approved for a limited time, not to exceed the maximum time frame set forth in the interim leasing program criteria, because the proposal is limited for a five year period through 2015.
2. The interim use utilizes existing facilities and does not require substantial new development, because the applicant can use former Navy utility facilities and the parking lot in substantially their present conditions, with the addition of only temporary facilities for restrooms and display booths.

3. The interim use will not disrupt on-going operations of the government entity should the interim use occur concurrent with continuing operations by the government entity, because all military uses of the former Navy base have closed.
4. The interim use will not be detrimental to the ultimate redevelopment of the property or the potential resumption of use of the property by the government entity, because no new permanent improvements to the site would occur.
5. The interim use is consistent with an interim leasing program adopted by the City, because conditions established for interim leases have been applied to the project and because, through the conditions of approval, ARRA staff will retain final authority in approving events in order to assure that the use would not compromise any development plans for the area and/or the other on-going uses of the site.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The permit is Categorically Exempt from environmental review, pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, in that the use would occur on an existing outdoor area, would only occur six times a year, and does not include any physical changes to the environment.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Board hold a public hearing and approve PLN11-0220 for a Use Permit for SCCA to hold up to six autocross events.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

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ANDREW THOMAS  
PLANNING SERVICES MANAGER

Attachment:

1. Resolution
2. SCCA Application Materials